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ABSTRACT

The Quantum Opportunities Program (QOP) is an innovative 4-year year-round pilot program that provides learning opportunities, development opportunities, service opportunities, and summer jobs to small groups of youth from families receiving public assistance. In 1994, the Ford Foundation commissioned an evaluation of the QOP. Between 1989 and 1993, 100 disadvantaged minority teenagers joined QOP at 5 different sites, in Philadelphia (Pennsylvania), Oklahoma City (Oklahoma), Saginaw (Michigan), San Antonio (Texas), and Milwaukee (Wisconsin). QOP differed from most youth job training programs in that it provided youngsters with adult mentors who stayed with them over the 4 years. Compared to a random sample of peers not enrolled in QOP, participants improved their basic skills, and were more likely to graduate from high school, and go on to postsecondary school or college. They were also less likely than their peers to have babies or become unemployed. A major finding from the QOP evaluation is that youth will stick with a program if the adult mentors stick with them. Many factors contributed to the success of QOP, including small groups of participants per site, a community-based, case management approach, and the early age at which the program is initiated, typically 14 or 15. Multiple dimensions, including financial incentives for hourly work, contributed to program success. A cost-benefit analysis suggests that, for every dollar spent, $3.68 is gained in public benefit, assuming that college students finish their educations. QOP shows that something can be done for these disadvantaged students, and that opportunity and community matter. Community-based organizations are able to manage a complex program of this nature, although adequate funding is a necessity. (Contains 10 references.) (SLD)

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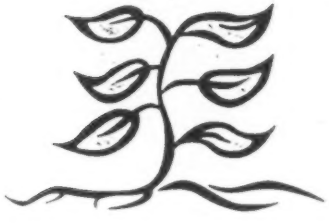
QUANTUM

OPPORTUNITIES



PROGRAM

A Brief on the QOP Pilot Program

SEPTEMBER 1995

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SEPTEMBER 1995 CENTER FOR HUMAN RESOURCES • BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY

Message to Our Colleagues

In the fall of 1989, if you were a 14-year-old from a welfare family, attending a public high school in an impoverished neighborhood, the odds for success were stacked against you—unless you were one of the 100 youngsters offered a quantum opportunity to build a new future. This is their story.

The Quantum Opportunities Program (called "QOP") is an innovative four-year, year-round pilot program that provided learning opportunities, development opportunities, service opportunities and summer jobs to small groups of youth from families receiving public assistance.

The QOP pilot has been an important social policy experiment, one with substantial implications for reform in welfare, education, and workforce development. It combines and creatively applies strategies that work:

- QOP assumes that these kids can make it and are worth the investment.
- QOP recognizes that multi-year, year-round, multi-faceted investments are needed in education, personal development, and community service.
- QOP incorporates significant and sustained adult mentoring, counseling, and tough love.
- QOP offers financial incentives to young people and staff.

Through this four-year pilot program and a rigorous evaluation, we learned that it is possible to make a quantum difference in the lives of these youths. We learned that it takes a critical mass of service, support, nurturing, incentives, creativity, caring, compassion, and especially patience. And, we learned that the impacts on young people gain strength over time. This is an important lesson for policymakers, who customarily seek immediate feedback about program success or failure. Premature examination would have labeled this program a failure.

Many important policy questions remain—questions of scale, program ecology (space and place), infrastructure and staffing among them. Having demonstrated success with very small groups of young people, how large can this effort become and still achieve success? Having demonstrated a community-based model, will the program work in other contexts? Having hand-picked staff to work with these youngsters, can we find—or develop—more of these caring, compassionate, competent mentors? These are among the important issues yet to be explored.[1]

MESSAGE FROM QOP PARTICIPANTS

In the Fall of 1994, the Ford Foundation convened a select group of social policy-makers, researchers and philanthropists to examine the Quantum Opportunities Program. Two voices at the table helped to answer many of the hardest questions—these were the voices of QOP participants Jacqueline Jones and Cherise Woffel. Here's a summary of what they told us:

"The program was hard. Education was the main thing. QOP helped us further our education, helped us succeed in high school, and plan for college and beyond. We had to think about career goals, family life, and each other. We had homework, computer assisted instruction, SATs, math tests, tutoring. We did community service, went to school, and set career goals. The program helped us understand the world. It widened our horizons and exposed us to the world outside our own neighborhood. We had to dress properly, and we had constant nagging, motivation, and support from our two mentors.

This program changed our outlook. When we became more dependable, unselfish, and self-respecting, we wanted to associate with others like us. It changed how hard we were willing to work. With an entire support system rooting for our success, it was more difficult to give up. We were taught to work harder than the next person to be the best we can be.

QOP helped us understand the person that's inside: to trust people and understand the world and be a better person by helping others—not just be out for personal gain. We are eager to pass these lessons on, and continue to educate and help young people understand themselves as well as the world.

My youngest sister keeps asking: 'Will there be a program for me?' I tell her your big sister is working on it and hopefully there will.

QOP—What's That?

In a small social experiment conducted over a four-year period (1989–1993), one hundred disadvantaged, minority teenagers joined the Quantum Opportunities Program and began a journey to change the trajectory of their lives. This program was unlike most traditional youth job training and employment programs. It provided these youngsters with caring, competent, compassionate adult mentors who stuck with them over four years, no matter what. During that time, each youth participated in intensive education, personal development, and community service opportunities, strove toward financial incentives and received maximum encouragement to persevere. What did they get in return for all of their hard work? A way out of the ghetto, and a leg up on their futures. Compared to a *random* sample of their peers who were not enrolled in the program, the QOP youngsters improved their basic skills, graduated from high school and went on to post-secondary school or college. They also were much less likely to have babies or become unemployed.

What exactly is the Quantum Opportunities Program?

An Innovative Youth Development Pilot Program... The Quantum Opportunities Project (QOP) was a five-site youth development pilot program designed to serve very disadvantaged youth from families receiving public assistance. The program design called for a rigorous evaluation to:

- Test the "take-up rate" when a rich and continuous set of services is offered;
- Learn about the relative impacts of diverse program components;
- Assess the capacity of a community-based organization to manage a complex pilot program over several years;
- Test a financial incentive structure that rewards youth *and* program staff for sticking with the program; and
- Increase our understanding of the barriers and pathways for serving poor, largely minority youth in multi-year, year-round programs offering both tangible services and relationships with caring adults.

Forward-funded by the Ford Foundation... With $1.3 million in funding provided up-front from the Ford Foundation, the program initially enrolled 25 youths in each of five communities.[2]

Providing Education, Service, and Development Activities... Over a four-year period, from 9th grade through high school graduation, each QOP participant could receive annually:

- 250 hours of education—participating in computer-assisted instruction, peer tutoring, homework assistance, etc.;
- 250 hours of service activities—participating in community service projects, helping with public events, holding regular jobs; and
- 250 hours of development activities—acquiring life/family skills, planning for college and jobs.

Combined with Financial Incentives... Students received hourly stipends for their activities, starting at $1.00 and rising to $1.33. After completing 100 hours, participants received a $100 bonus and an equal amount was invested for them in an interest bearing Quantum Opportunity Account for approved use, such as college or training. QOP staff also received bonus payments and incentives to do whatever it takes to keep youngsters in the program.

And Compassionate, Caring, Competent Adults... The real key to this program is the philosophy and the persistence of the staff involved, and their dogged determination to enable and encourage these young people to succeed. "Once in QOP, always in QOP," was their motto. While these youngsters were permitted to get away with nothing, nothing they could do would be bad enough to be expelled from the program. Even in the face of pregnancy, delinquency, dropping out, cutting out, or failing in school, these youngsters were encouraged, cajoled, and coaxed back on track. This was an anti-attrition philosophy. Young people were seen as individuals with specific needs and great potential, not as program slots to be filled and replaced.

What is QOP? A quantum opportunity for disadvantaged youth.

What Was the Quantum Opportunities Program (QOP) Pilot? QOP was an innovative four-year, year-round pilot program that provided learning opportunities, development opportunities, service opportunities and summer jobs to small groups of youth from families receiving public assistance.

When Did It Run? The initial pilot program began in the Summer of 1989 and ended in the Summer of 1993. The U.S. Department of Labor national demonstration replicating QOP will begin in the Summer of 1995.

Where Did It Operate? QOP was piloted in five communities: Philadelphia, Saginaw, Oklahoma City, San Antonio and Milwaukee.[3] For information on the QOP pilot in specific communities, contact the following individuals:

Phyllis Lawrence and Reuben Mills
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Opportunities Industrialization Centers of America, Inc.
1231 North Broad Street
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215.236.7700

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1000 Tuscola Street
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Opportunities Industrialization Center
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San Antonio, TX 78202
512.225.6291

What Participant Outcomes Did We Measure? The six academic skills tested included vocabulary, comprehension, mathematics computation, mathematics concepts and applications, language mechanics, and language expression. The five functional skills measured included occupational knowledge, consumer economics, government and law, health, and community resources. We also measured involvement in jobs and post-secondary training, civic participation, impacts on teen pregnancy, crime, self-esteem, and other factors.

Who Did What? The concept and design of QOP were created by Robert Taggart, Executive Director, Opportunity Institute, and Benjamin Lattimore, Director, Learning Opportunity Center, OICs of America. The QOP Pilot was funded by the Ford Foundation. Robert Curvin, Director, Urban Poverty Program, directed Ford's involvement. Each program was administered by an affiliate of the community-based organization, Opportunities Industrialization Centers of America, Inc. (OIC), except Milwaukee, where the service provider was Learning Enterprise, an alternative education program. The pilot evaluation was designed and conducted by Andrew Hahn, Professor and Associate Dean, Brandeis University, Heller Graduate School. The project was part of the Heller School's Center for Human Resources.

What Is Happening Now? The four-year pilot project was completed in 1993. Follow-up studies were conducted by Brandeis University one year post-program, and Robert Taggart two years post-program. Based on pilot results, the U.S. Department of Labor is funding a multi-site demonstration program and an evaluation of the program, beginning in the Summer of 1995.

What Reports Are Available? A chronological list of available research and evaluation reports on the QOP pilot is provided in the bibliography at the end of this brochure.

Why It Is A Quantum Leap

QOP stands apart from other youth programs because of its philosophy, its design, and its results. In the history of social policymaking in the United States, there have been all too few long-term, year-round, multi-service programs for disadvantaged youth, and even fewer that have been rigorously evaluated. This program shoulders the extra responsibility of bucking both conventional wisdom and conventional practice.

A Stick-With-It Philosophy. QOP debunks the myth that nothing works for economically disadvantaged, minority adolescents. QOP's key finding is that these young people will stick with the program, especially if the adults stick with them. In one exceptional pilot site, for example, after four years of program operation, 24 of the original 25 youth were still actively involved.

A Well-Planned Design—A Set of Top-notch Services. What made QOP work? Many factors contributed to its success:

- Small groups of young people, only 25 per site, bonding with each other and with caring adults.
- A community-based, case-management approach, tied closely to schools, and individually tailored to the youth's own needs and circumstances.
- A program that starts early, at age 13, 14 or 15, before many young people are in deep trouble, and invests year-round over four years, helping them plan for the future.
- An approach with multiple dimensions, building basic skills, imparting life and social skills, broadening horizons, and enabling young people to give back to their communities.
- Financial incentives, rewarding youngsters immediately for hourly work, providing periodic completion bonuses, and contributing matching funds to their escrow accounts over the longer-term. These financial services were linked to a school program design and would not have worked standing alone without the other program components.
- Program administrators who go the extra mile, tracking the whereabouts and the activities of each young person, making home visits, and motivating the youngsters to go the extra mile, too.
- Multi-year funding, provided in advance, so that excellent staff can be recruited and retained, and so that the youngsters can absolutely count on this program sticking with them.

- A touch of competition among sites, which translates into high expectations for program participants.
- A rigorous evaluation built in, so that sites hold to the program design, and to assess what works and what doesn't when trying to make a difference in the lives of young people.

Results That Speak for Themselves. The net outcomes of this program in the post-high school period were both statistically significant and policy significant:[4]

QOP yielded consequential differences overall and positive differences in each site:

- QOP members are more likely to be high school graduates: 63 percent of QOP members have graduated high school compared to 42 percent of the control group.
- QOP members are more likely to go on to post-secondary schools: 42 percent of QOP members compared to 16 percent of the control group.
- QOP members are less likely to be high school dropouts: 23 percent of QOP members compared to 50 percent of the control group.
- QOP members are more likely to have received an honor or award in the past year: 34 percent of QOP members compared to 12 percent of the control group.
- QOP members are less likely to become teen parents: 24 percent of QOP members compared to 38 percent of the control group.

Significant Differences Overall. QOP members are more likely to be involved in community service, more likely to be hopeful about the future, and more likely to consider their lives a success. Perhaps the most encouraging finding is that QOP members are significantly better off in all four sites. Program evaluators found that even in sites where group activities dwindled or services were sporadic, "even a light touch for several years produces positive impacts above and beyond the outcomes experienced by young people assigned to the control groups." These findings stand in sharp contrast to the many negative or very modest results found in other youth employment and training programs.

Results That Are Cost Beneficial. A cost-benefit analysis measuring the value of the impacts of this program shows that for each dollar spent, $3.68 is gained in public benefit, assuming college students finish their education. If we assume that only one-third of the two-year and four-year college students attain degrees, the benefit-cost ratio is $3.04 for each dollar spent.

NET IMPACTS OF QOP PILOT IN FOUR SITES

Characteristic	*All Four Sites*	*Philadelphia*
Graduated from high school and in post-secondary school	+26	+48
Graduated from high school	+21	+28
Received honors or awards in past 12 months	+22	+48
Donated time to a nonprofit, charitable, school, or community group in past 6 months	+30	+56
Served as volunteer counselor, mentor, or tutor in past 12 months	+20	+36
Responded "Strongly agree" to the statement: "I am hopeful about the future."	+21	+37
Live with parents		-24
Have children	-14	
High school dropout	-27	-36
Unemployed, not in school, and not a high school graduate	-32	

This table covers results of the QOP pilot during the period of 1989–1993. The first column portrays the average results of all four sites combined. The second column displays the exemplary results in one of the four sites, Philadelphia. Numbers represent the percentage point difference in both columns between the experimental group and the control group.[5]

The QOP Effect: QOP's Statistically Significant Results Increased Over Time...

End of 9th Grade

Test scores decline for QOP youth.

No significant differences in education expectations comparing QOP participants to the control group.

End of 10th Grade

Average scores in 11 academic and functional skills areas are greater for QOP participants.

Performance in five of the 11 skill areas is significantly better than controls.

Education expectations favor QOP participants over their peers in the control group.

End of Senior Year

Performance in all 11academic and functional skill areas is stronger among QOP youth, and the differences in all skill areas are statistically significant.

Fall After Scheduled High School Graduation

There were significant differences overall, and positive differences in each site:

- more high school graduates
- more college enrollment
- more honors and awards
- fewer teens having children

How QOP Works

"How do you treat your own kids? You reward them when they behave well, and punish them when they don't. It's a simple idea, really, but it works." This is the description of QOP provided by Ben Lattimore, Director of OIC's Learning Opportunity Center and program co-founder and administrator. "And, like a real family, even with mistakes and adversity, your kids remain a part of the family, and retain a piece of your heart."

The critical difference is that in QOP, these youngsters belong to an extended family whose sole purpose is to nurture their success. QOP makes sure they have the resources to do it right. What other social program for disadvantaged youth tracks them down when they cut class, follows them if they move to a new neighborhood, stays with them if they go to prison, takes them to cultural events and fine restaurants, tutors them with their schoolwork, worries about their health, fitness and cholesterol levels, urges them to excel?

QOP sets high expectations, uses state-of-the-art program content, and provides an extensive network of adult and peer support. It begins with the premise that these youngsters are worth the investment. In the words of program co-founder Ben Lattimore, QOP associates are "some of the brightest, sharpest and eager-to-learn streetwise kids you'll ever find. They know drugs, murder, pain, loneliness, sexual abuse, despair. They will dazzle you with nonsense, open you up to reality, and teach you the '90s...These are the Quantum Opportunities Program associates, some with babies, others living on their own, and some so close to the final encounter with the law or the law of the streets that we pray for their safety."

> *How do you treat your own kids? You reward them when they behave well, and punish them when they don't. It's a simple idea, really, but it works.*
>
> **Ben Lattimore, Program Co-founder**
> **Opportunities Industrialization**
> **Centers of America, Inc.**

Rather than recruit from among self-selected, motivated young people, this program selected poor youth randomly. To test how many young people are interested in the QOP model, the pilot sought to recruit from among a cross-section of very poor youth. The research design called for program operators to find these randomly selected youth, and convince them to join the program. Unlike most social programs that serve those who have been pre-screened or who have indicated an interest and motivation to participate, QOP served a randomly selected list of students who were in school, heading to the 9th grade, and from welfare families.

QOP takes elements from proven programs and puts them together in one package. The pilot project includes multi-year, year-round educational activities (tutoring, computer-based instruction, and other educational services focused on increasing high school attendance, achievement, completion, and college enrollment), community service activities aimed at improving conditions in the communities, and personal development activities to learn more about health, alcohol and drug abuse prevention, safe sex, family planning, arts, careers, and college planning. Both students and program staff receive financial encouragements to meet program participation goals.

"Once in QOP, always in QOP. This is our motto and our modus operandi."

Phyllis Lawrence
Director, Education & Special Programs
Philadelphia Opportunities Industrialization Center

QUANTUM RESULTS

The Good News. Evaluations of QOP impacts on young people's lives show that this program works in the aggregate. For the 100 young people who participated, QOP led 21 more to graduate high school, 26 more to go on to post-secondary schools, 27 fewer became dropouts, and 14 fewer became teen parents.

At the outset of the program, researchers anticipated that as many as 70 percent of QOP's students might drop out during the four years. Instead, fewer than 40 percent dropped out—the graduation rate was over 60 percent.

One of the most important lessons from this program is that positive results emerged over several years. After QOP's first year, the positive impacts were slight and statistically insignificant, but by the time QOP youngsters were leaving high school, the results became statistically significant. If a program of this sort is judged too soon, its impacts may not be fully evident. For policymakers who want and need more immediate evidence of returns on investments, this pilot program illustrates the importance of being patient. Clearly, QOP's positive results accelerated over time.

The Caveats. However promising the initial results, the QOP experiment is based on a very small number of sites and a very small sample of youngsters. It has not yet been proven at scale, or tested with variations in design.

Performance of the five pilot demonstration sites was sufficiently mixed so that if we had looked only at the poor performing ones, we would have written it off as another expensive failure. Remove the results of the best performing site, and program results are much more ordinary. Add another Philadelphia, the most successful site, and this program sets a new Olympic record of achievement. The question is, can we create more Philadelphias when we expand the experiment?

QOP was also highly dependent upon the talents and tenaciousness of the hand-picked staff. These people took extraordinary measures to stick with these young people.

There were wide variations in program results in different sites, and the results were not all positive. One of the five original sites, Milwaukee, met with difficulties in program implementation and participant follow-up, and was ultimately dropped from the overall evaluation. There was a change in program administration, and a lack of adherence to the program design. QOP did not fare well in Milwaukee. The question is, can we guard against more Milwaukees when we expand the experiment?

THE QOP EFFECT: IMPACTS ACCELERATED OVER TIME

The rate of differentiation between the experimental and control groups accelerated after the first two years of high school.

- After one year (freshman in high school), Brandeis evaluators concluded that evidence to support a hypothesis of positive influence on the experimental group was insufficient.
- After two years, however, the positive QOP effect was readily apparent. The average scores for all 11 academic and functional skills in the experimental group were higher than control group scores and five of these were statistically significant. This finding, in and of itself, is interesting for the field of youth programming: it took over two years for this program to find its legs, work out daily implementation issues and begin to show statistically significant impacts.
- By the time most of the sample were leaving high school, average experimental group scores on all 11 skills were much higher than control group scores and all of these differences were statistically significant. Average academic skill levels had increased more than three grade levels for 27 percent of the experimental group compared to 14 percent of the control group. Similarly, average functional skill levels had increased by 20 percent or more for 38 percent of the experimental group compared to 16 percent of the control group.
- There were also accelerating differences between the experimental and control groups with regard to their orientation toward and expectations for post-secondary education.

THE SOCIAL POLICY SIGNIFICANCE OF QOP

At the outset, QOP planners and funders sought to answer some basic research questions about what can be done, if anything, for poor youth from deprived neighborhoods.

What practitioners, researchers, funders and policymakers learned from QOP went far beyond the initial research design. QOP demonstrated:

- First, that *something works* for these kids.
- Second, that *opportunity matters*. When a quantum opportunity was offered, young people from public assistance backgrounds took it. This simple finding defies the theory that things are so bad in some neighborhoods and kids are so estranged that these youngsters will not take advantage of an opportunity even if it is handed to them.
- Third, that *continuity matters*. Even when programs were unable to achieve a consistent group identity or deliver a steady stream of services, if young people are connected with caring adults for a sustained period of time, positive results emerge.
- Fourth, that *community-based organizations can manage* a complex pilot project over several years. These programs work best when they are neighborhood based, close to young people's school and home. Schools were partners in QOP but they would have a hard time running the QOP program with its emphasis on sustained relationships and year-round efforts.
- Fifth, that *money matters*. While many youngsters indicated that the financial incentives were "chump change," the funds from these stipends also helped feed their families. And, on the program level, the assurance provided by the Ford Foundation's "forward funding" gave a measure of stability to both the staff and the youngsters. They understood that this was a commitment, an investment in something important, an investment in them.

- Sixth, that *investments in at-risk youth can make a difference* in their lives. QOP holds some very important lessons for how to use government and foundation resources to achieve greater impacts for at-risk youth in our society. Given the current debates about domestic spending, and the current climate of program consolidation and deficit reduction, QOP holds significant promise as a cost-effective path for young people from at-risk circumstances.

- Finally, *the outcomes of these investments gain strength over time*. When evaluating this or other similar programs, it is important to allow sufficient time for the program to demonstrate statistically significant results.

While we have much more to learn, and much more to study, it is clear that the Quantum Opportunities Program can help inform the debates in welfare reform, school reform, and workforce development reform. QOP is now being tested in other settings and circumstances with variations on the original design. It should prove enlightening for our nation's domestic social policymakers. Time will tell.

One thing is certain. While the adults involved in this social experiment have gained a great deal, the ultimate value of the program can be measured by the 100 youngsters who saw the quantum opportunity, and took it. Their lives have been changed, their prospects improved, and their futures are more in their control.

Quantum Opportunity Program. published by OIC of America. Philadelphia. PA. 19122. Phone: 215.236.4500. Fax: 215.236.7480. **March 1995.** Provides an overview of QOP, a review of first and second year post-program impacts, a glimpse at the youngsters who participated, and reprints of news articles about the program, including an article in *The New York Times*.

Evaluation of The Quantum Opportunities Program (QOP): Did The Program Work?. prepared by Andrew Hahn with Tom Leavitt and Paul Aaron. Brandeis University. Heller Graduate School. Center for Human Resources. Waltham. MA 02254. **June 1994.** A report on the post secondary outcomes and cost-effectiveness of the QOP Program (1989-1993).

Evaluation of The Quantum Opportunities Program (QOP): Did The Program Work? Executive Summary, prepared by Andrew Hahn. Brandeis University. Heller Graduate School. Center for Human Resources. Waltham. MA 02254. **June 1994.** Executive Summary of the above listed report.

Quantum Opportunities Program: Promise for the Future. Robert Taggart. December 1993. An overview of the QOP program, its results, its participants, and the lessons we can learn from it.

Interim reports are available on a selected basis to interested researchers. For information on Brandeis Reports, please send your request to the attention of Joan Walsh. Center for Human Resources. Heller Graduate School. Brandeis University. Waltham. MA 02254. Telephone: 800.343.4705 or 617.736.3774.

a) **Quantum Opportunities Program Report,** prepared by Andrew Hahn. Paul Aaron. and Tom Leavitt. Brandeis University. Heller Graduate School. Center for Human Resources. Waltham. MA 02254. **October 1993.** The sixth in a series of reports on the development and impacts of the Quantum Opportunities Program, based on site visits and surveys.

b) **What Does It Take: Forging Long-term Allegiance Among Youth From Public Assistance Households,** prepared by Andrew Hahn, Paul Aaron, and Tom Leavitt, Brandeis University, Heller Graduate School, Center for Human Resources, Waltham, MA 02254, **March 1993.** An interim report from the Quantum Opportunities Program (QOP) providing an insiders' account that weaves together first-hand testimony from staff, youth participants, and researchers, and presents survey data.

c) **Evaluation of the Quantum Opportunities Program: Interim Impacts Covering the Ninth-Tenth Grades (1989-1991),** prepared by Andrew Hahn, Brandeis University, Heller Graduate School Center for Human Resources, Waltham, MA 02254, **June 1992.** A review of test group versus control group experiences and outcomes after the first two years of program operation.

d) **Evaluation of the Quantum Opportunities Program: The First Year of Program Operations,** prepared by Andrew Hahn, Brandeis University, Heller Graduate School, Center for Human Resources, Waltham, MA 02254, **June 1991.** An early look at participant profiles and performance.

e) **Quantum Opportunities Project, Report on Site Visits—1991,** prepared by Andrew Hahn, Brandeis University, Heller Graduate School, Center for Human Resources, Waltham, MA 02254, **May 1991.** A report summarizing QOP site visits to Philadelphia, Milwaukee, Oklahoma City, Saginaw, and San Antonio.

f) **The Quantum Opportunities Project: Interim Research Report,** prepared by Andrew Hahn, Brandeis University, Heller Graduate School, Center for Human Resources, Waltham, MA 02254, **July 1990.** An interim report that reviews progress the sites have made in implementing the QOP model.

End Notes

1. The U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, Office of Strategic Planning and Policy Development is now (1995) conducting a national demonstration of the Quantum Opportunities Program in five additional sites nationwide: Houston, Texas; Memphis, Tennessee; the District of Columbia; Fort Worth, Texas; and Cleveland, Ohio. In addition, the Ford Foundation is funding QOP demonstration sites operated by Opportunities Industrialization Centers of America (OIC). Each site will have 100 QOP participants and 100 youngsters in the control group. The Department of Labor's QOP demonstration will provide funds to replicate and formally evaluate the QOP model piloted by the Ford Foundation. The project is directed specifically toward at-risk youth entering the ninth grade. The objectives of the project are to enable participants to complete high school and improve their rate of entering and succeeding in post-secondary education. For further information on the Department of Labor's national replication, please contact Patricia A. Taylor, Telephone: 202.219.5472 or David Lah, Telephone: 202.219.5782. For further information on the evaluation of this demonstration, please contact Eileen Pederson, Telephone 202.219.5782, extension 145.

2. The funding figures cited in this publication cover a pilot project in five sites funded by the Ford Foundation from 1989 through 1993. Five pilot sites began operations in 1989 and four of the original five continued in operation through 1993.

3. One of the five original sites, Milwaukee, met with difficulties in program implementation and participant follow-up, and was ultimately dropped from the overall evaluation.

4. The Brandeis University QOP random assignment evaluation design ended after the first post-program year—that would be one year after high school graduation for many QOP participants. In February 1995, Robert Taggart documented second post-program year impacts for the Quantum Opportunity Program. This follow-up study, one year later—that would be the sophomore year in college for some program participants—showed continuing significant and positive impacts for QOP participants.

5. The source for this data is Hahn et al., "Evaluation of the Quantum Opportunities Program (QOP)—Did the Program Work?" Waltham, MA: Brandeis University, Heller Graduate School, Center for Human Resources, 1994.

Acknowledgments

Behind every facet of program success lies a legion of visionary and dedicated institutions and individuals. As program evaluators, we would first like to express our appreciation to the Ford Foundation for their quantum leadership throughout this pilot project, and their willingness to take a course through uncharted waters. In particular, we would like to thank Robert Curvin, Director, Urban Poverty Program, for his vision and support throughout the project. We would also like to thank the QOP staff and participants at each of the five pilot sites for their forthrightness and their fervor. We extend special thanks to the two individuals who gave birth to the idea of QOP and followed through on its premise and its promise--Ben Lattimore, and Robert Taggart. We would also like to thank the young people who shared their experiences and their insights about the program.

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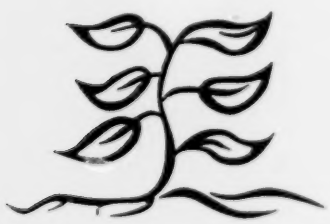

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